

# US to send 560 more troops to Iraq: Carter

AFP, Baghdad

The United States will send an additional 560 military personnel to Iraq to assist in its fight against the Islamic State jihadist group, visiting Defence Secretary Ashton Carter announced yesterday.

The increase will bring the total authorised number of American forces in Iraq, most of whom are in advisory or training roles, to more than 4,600, further deepening Washington's military involvement.

"I am pleased to report today that... we agreed for the United States to bolster Iraqi efforts to isolate and pressure Mosul by deploying 560 additional troops," Carter said in Baghdad, referring to Iraq's IS-held second city.

"The additional troops will provide a range of support for Iraqi security forces, including infrastructure and logistical capabilities at the airfield near Qayyarah," the Pentagon said in a statement on Carter's announcement.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced Saturday that Iraqi forces had recaptured the Qayyarah airbase, some 60

kilometres (35 miles) south of Mosul, which IS seized in June 2014.

The base "will become a vital springboard for the (Iraqi forces') offensive into Mosul", the Pentagon said.

IS overran large areas north and west of Baghdad in 2014, but Iraqi forces backed by US-led air strikes, training and other assistance have since regained significant ground.

US-led forces invaded Iraq in 2003, overthrowing dictator Saddam Hussein and also setting the stage for 13 years of bloody violence in the country, including the rise of IS.

President Barack Obama hailed the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq at the end of 2011 as a major achievement of his presidency, but the war against IS has drawn the American military ever deeper back into Iraq.

US defence officials say the campaign's first "10 plays" have been successfully completed in the US-led counter-IS campaign in Iraq and Syria. These steps include the recapture of several important areas across the two countries, including Ramadi in Iraq and Al-Shadadi, a town in northeastern Syria.

## FIGHT AGAINST IS



Syrians look at the damage in a street in the ancient Syrian Quarter of the regime-held area of the northern Syrian city of Aleppo following rocket attacks by rebels yesterday. Syrian opposition fighters launched a major assault on government-held districts of Aleppo city after the regime severed their only remaining supply route into the city.

PHOTO: AFP

## NEWS IN brief

### IS link: 21 people missing from Kerala

PTI, Thiruvananthapuram

Amidst reports of some Keralites joining terror outfit Islamic State, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan yesterday told the Assembly that 21 persons have gone missing from the State. The Chief Minister, who was replying to a submission raised by Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala, said 17 were missing from Kasaragod and four from Palakkad.

### Ethiopia blocks social media for exams

BBC ONLINE

Ethiopia has blocked social media sites across the country after university entrance exams were posted online. The government said the ban was to prevent students being distracted from studying during the exam period and to prevent the spread of false rumours. The blocked sites include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Viber. "It's a temporary measure until Wednesday," said spokesman Getachew Reda.

### Afghans welcome Nato's security pledge

AFP, Kabul

Afghan president Ashraf Ghani yesterday welcomed an "achievement" the renewed funding commitment from Nato for his country's fledgling security forces amid increasing Taliban insurgency. On Saturday, Nato countries agreed at a summit in Warsaw to maintain troop numbers in Afghanistan and reiterated a funding pledge of \$5 billion a year for local security forces until 2020.

### Israel okays millions to WB settlements

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's government on Sunday approved nearly \$13 million in financing for the West Bank settlements of Kiryat Arba and within Hebron, officials said, following a wave of Palestinian attacks in the area. The decision by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing cabinet will see some 50 million shekels (\$12.8 million, 11.6 million euros) allocated to "strengthen" the communities.

### Thai journo charged under draconian law

AFP, Bangkok

A Thai journalist and four activists were charged yesterday under a draconian law banning criticism of the junta's new constitution which will be voted on in a referendum next month. Taweek Kerdpoka, a reporter with the news outlet Prachatai, was arrested on Sunday morning alongside four members of the New Democracy Movement, one of the few activist groups that dare to challenge the military since generals seized power two years ago.

## JAMMU, KASHMIR VIOLENCE

# Protesters try to storm military airbase

AFP, Srinagar

Hundreds of protesters tried to storm a military airbase in Indian Kashmir yesterday, the third day of deadly clashes between government forces and demonstrators angered by the killing of a popular young rebel.

Police said 30 people had now died in the violence, most of them protesters killed by gunshot wounds as government forces fired live ammunition and tear gas to try to enforce a curfew imposed across the Kashmir Valley.

Thousands again defied the curfew to take to the streets yesterday. Police said several hundred protesters tried to storm an Indian Airforce base about 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of the capital Srinagar as the worst civilian unrest since 2010 spread.

"A few hundred protesters stormed the airforce base," said a senior officer on condition of anonymity.

"We do not know if firearms were used, but the protesters were pushed back," he said, adding there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Protesters also set police stations and vehicles on fire. On Sunday one police officer drowned when his armoured vehicle was pushed into a river.

The demonstrations follow the killing on Friday of Burhan Wani, a 22-year-old commander of Kashmir's largest militant group Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), during a gun battle with government forces.

HM is one of several homegrown militant groups that have for decades been fighting around half a million Indian troops deployed in the region, calling for independence or a merger with Pakistan.

Around 300 people have been injured, including nearly 100 police, and hospitals say they are overwhelmed.

There were also reports of injured protesters being targeted -- one local doctors' association said Sunday that tear gas canisters had been fired inside a hospital emergency room.

# Brexit means Brexit

Says Theresa May; 1,000 lawyers tell Cameron EU referendum result 'not legally binding'

AGENCIES

The favourite to take over from David Cameron as Britain's prime minister yesterday promised to lead the UK out of the European Union if elected, rejecting proposals to ignore the EU referendum result.

"Brexit means Brexit and we're going to make a success of it," interior minister Theresa May said in televised remarks as she launched her campaign in Birmingham, central England, reports AFP.

"There will be no attempts to remain inside the EU, there will be no attempts to rejoin it by the back door, no second referendum," she said.

"I will make sure that we leave the European Union," said May, who campaigned for Britain to stay in the EU ahead of the June 23 referendum in which 52 percent of voters opted to leave.

"The British people were given their opportunity to vote on this," the home secretary said.

"They've given us a very clear message and I think we respond to that message and we do what the British people have asked us to."

May's only rival Andrea Leadsom, a junior energy minister, has emphasised her credentials as a top

Brexit campaigner and her supporters say only she can be trusted to enact Britain's withdrawal.

Asked how she would negotiate access to the EU's single market, May said: "We need to get the best deal in trade and goods and services".

"I'm very clear that the Brexit vote was also a message that we need to get control on free movement. Free movement cannot continue as it has done until now," she said.

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 lawyers have signed a letter addressed to Prime Minister David Cameron saying the EU referendum result is merely "advisory" and not legally binding, reports The Independent.

Arguing the vote for Brexit, which was opposed by world leaders such as Barack Obama and Christine Lagarde of the International Monetary Fund, is far from guaranteed, the group advised the Government to carefully consider whether to follow through with the British public's vote to leave the European Union.

Before Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty -- the route via which members states leave the EU -- can be triggered, they say primary legislation will need to be enacted.



Venezuelans carrying groceries cross the Simon Bolivar bridge from Cucuta in Colombia back to San Antonio de Tachira in Venezuela, on Sunday. Thousands of Venezuelans crossed the border with Colombia to buy food and medicines which are scarce in their country.

PHOTO: AFP

# Sanders to join Clinton for New Hampshire rally

AFP, Washington

Bernie Sanders will join Hillary Clinton at a presidential campaign rally in New Hampshire today at which he is expected to deliver his long-awaited endorsement.

Both campaigns said yesterday that Sanders will join the former secretary of state at a high school in the town of Portsmouth "to discuss their commitment to building an America that is stronger together and an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top."

They issued brief statements with that same language. Sanders has yet to endorse his former rival for the Democratic nomination.

support is the result of weeks of talks between the two campaigns aimed at unifying the party.

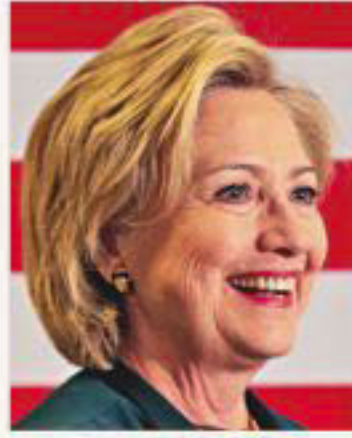
Clinton clinched enough delegates to secure the nomination in early June, after a yearlong battle with Sanders, a senator from Vermont.

But the feisty self-described democratic socialist nevertheless has refused to concede defeat to his more moderate rival, although he has said he will vote for Clinton and will do anything to help defeat Republican Donald Trump.

Sanders has been negotiating with the Clinton campaign to ensure that his ideas are part of the party platform presented at the Democratic convention later this month, when Clinton is formally nominated.

Party officials met over the weekend in Orlando, Florida to finalize the Democratic platform for the November election.

## RACE TO WHITE HOUSE



# US protest photo hailed as 'legendary'

BBC ONLINE

Protests have continued in the United States, after violent incidents involving African American people and the police last week.

On Sunday, dozens of protesters were arrested in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where a black man was killed by police last Tuesday.

In an atmosphere of heightened racial tension, and amid growing debate over the seeming militarisation of American police, one photo has stood out.

It was taken by Jonathan Bachman, a New Orleans-based photographer who has been working for Reuters in the past few days.

The image shows a young woman in a dress standing calmly in front of two police officers wearing layers of armour, and appearing to approach her in a hurry.

The photograph was taken outside the Baton Rouge police headquarters, where most of Saturday's protest was focused.

"The police were called out to clear

Airline Highway where demonstrators had blocked the road... They managed to get most of the protesters off to the side," Bachman told the BBC via email.

"I was on the side of the road photographing protesters arguing with police.

"I looked over my right shoulder



and saw the woman step onto the road. She was making her stand. She said nothing and was not moving. It was clear that the police were going to have to detain her.

Her identity remains unknown to him, he says. Reuters reports she was later detained, but little more is known about her.

# N Korea makes more threats to US, South

AP, Seoul

North Korea made more threats against its enemies yesterday, vowing to take unspecified "powerful" measures over a US plan to deploy an advanced missile defence system in South Korea.

The North Korean military statement was filled with the belligerent, over-the-top rhetoric common when Pyongyang sees an external threat. A direct military attack from Pyongyang's large but impoverished military, which would probably finish the country's authoritarian leadership after US and South Korean retaliation, is highly unlikely.

North Korea favors covert, surprise attacks such as the 2010 shelling of a South Korean island that killed four people, and Seoul has accused it of conducting a slew of cyberattacks.

The North's most recent threat, carried in state media, came three days after Seoul and Washington said they were close to determining a location in South Korea for the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system to better deal with North Korean threats.

The North said it will take an unspecified "physical counter-action" as soon as the THAAD location is announced. The statement also carried one of the North's favorite, oft-repeated threats: To turn Seoul into a "sea of fire." It has regularly warned it would do that since 1994. US and South Korean officials say THAAD only targets North Korea, but China and Russia suspect it could also help US radars detect their own missiles.

South Korea's President Park Geun-hye said yesterday she agreed on the US missile deployment because North Korea has openly threatened to launch nuclear and missile attacks on South Korea.

Other notable figures online to share the image include Calestous Juma, a Kenyan-born professor at the John F Kennedy School of Government, who was once named among the 100 most influential Africans.